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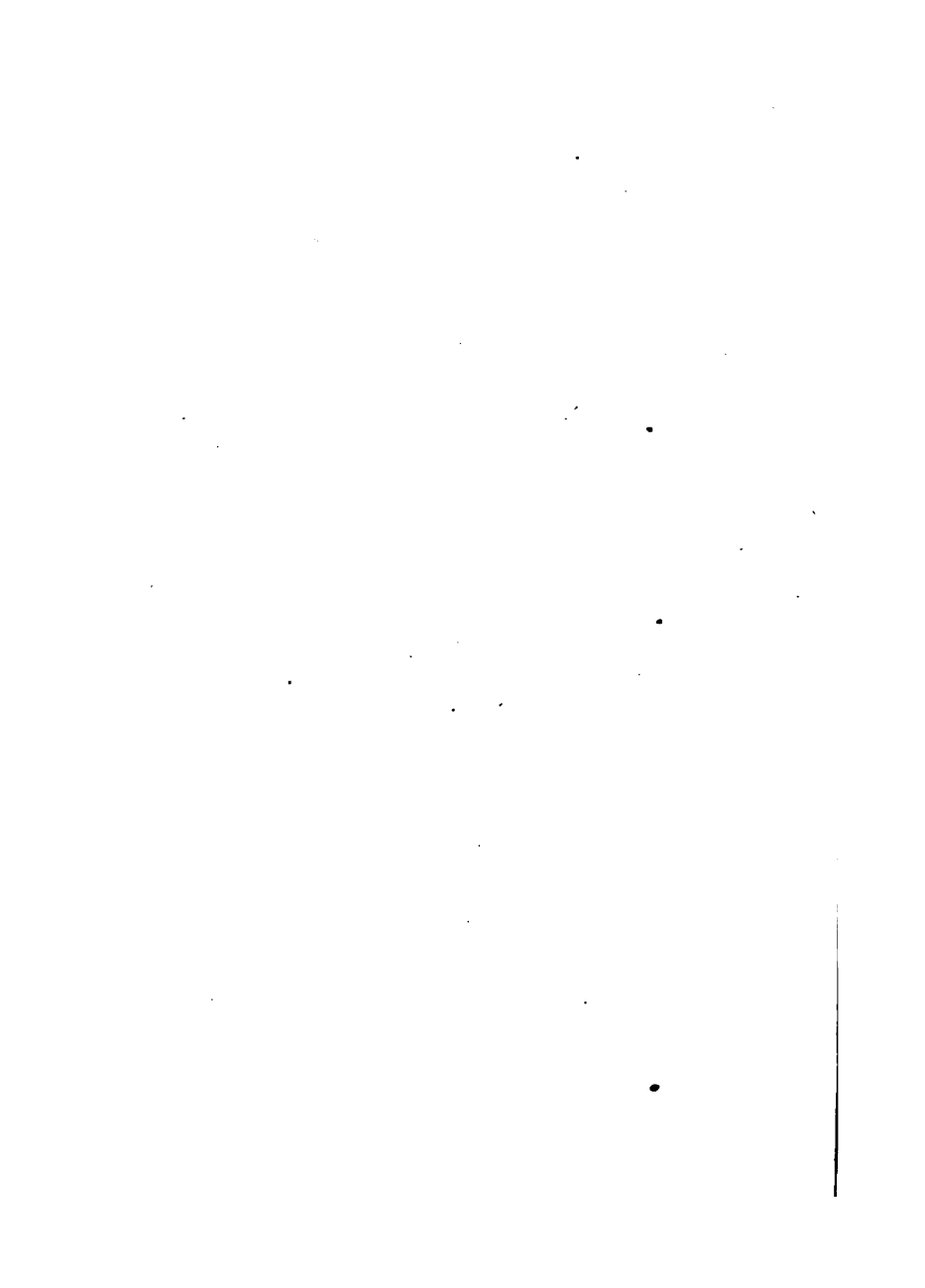




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LUCY SMITH,
THE MUSIC GOVERNESS.

**MURRAY AND GIBB, EDINBURGH,
PRINTERS TO HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.**



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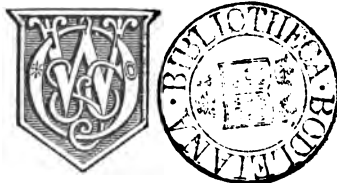


"A position which would have shocked Mrs. Foster exceedingly had she seen it"—Page 27.

LUCY SMITH,
THE MUSIC GOVERNESS.

By S. C. P.

AUTHOR OF 'BIDDY, THE MAID OF ALL WORK,' AND
'TIBBY THE CHARWOMAN.'




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P R E F A C E.

HEN SILVIO PELLICO, released from prison, and all his troubles over, transplanted to his own garden the little flower which within that prison's dreary walls had been to him as an angel visitant, he little thought that, steeped to the lips in the happiness of domestic love, he would so soon forget his PICCIOLA, and suffer it to wither away from sheer neglect. Miss Maurice has been more grateful; and though *her* PICCIOLA was transplanted to the heavenly soil, she has in the following pages embalmed the memory of LUCY SMITH.

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1



LUCY SMITH.

CHAPTER I.

MYSELF.

'A millstone and the human heart
Are driven ever round ;
If they have nothing else to grind,
They must themselves be ground.'

—LONGFELLOW.



WAS weary, very weary ; weary
of everything and everybody, and
most of all weary of myself, tired
of my very existence—doubtful at times of
my own identity ! My occupation was mo-
notonous, and I was weary of doing the
same thing day after day, week after week,
month after month, year after year. There

was no change, no variety, no excitement; nothing but the constant jingling of those horrid pianos for ever in my ears (wretched, worn-out instruments they were, out of which all the music had been beat and battered long before I had the misfortune to make their acquaintance). No rest, for I could not lay my head on the pillow at night without its pulses beating time to some murdered melody from Mozart or Rossini! Sunday was the only day I got any relief, the only day during which I experienced any sensations of happiness. Not that I had any of the refined spiritual perceptions, any of the deep feelings on the subject of religion, which to some people make the Sabbath a delight, a blessed foretaste of that heavenly rest for which they are looking and waiting. No, that was not *my* case; but I rejoiced in and enjoyed the wise and merciful provision of the sabbatic

rest, for on Sunday every piano in the house was shut, and there was rest and peace for the weary ears of the Music Governess. True, ghosts of lessons and scales *would* obtrude, even on Sunday, but they did not get the better of me as at other times. I could keep my tormentors in subjection and at a distance, though I sometimes caught myself setting the sermon to music, keeping time with an opera air to the monotonous cadence of the preacher's voice. On Sunday I had time to think, leisure to look back—back to the sunny days of my happy childhood, when the future lay before me an unknown, untrodden path, strewn with the flowers of a vivid imagination, gilded by the bright dreams of youthful enthusiasm—back to the days of my bitter affliction and sudden reverse of fortune when I lost both of my beloved parents, and was by unforeseen calamities reduced from affluence

to poverty—then to the brief space which followed, marked by feverish anxiety, and which ended in my obtaining the situation (filled by me now for six years) of music governess in Mrs. Foster's boarding and day school for young ladies at Raspberry House.

On Sundays we all marched to church in regular procession—a governess at intervals, like officers walking by the side of a regiment of soldiers—and glided gracefully into the four pews we filled to overflowing, a governess keeping guard at the end of each pew. We all repeated the responses in an audible tone, and were remarkable for the melody of our 'Amens;' but I fear there was little *real* worship amongst us, though I should except Mademoiselle, our French governess, who always appeared really devout, and who sometimes annoyed me exceedingly by exerting her shrill voice in the execution of an antiquated treble, adorned

with trills and shakes according to her own taste and fancy ! But notwithstanding Mademoiselle, I enjoyed the music ; the sound of the organ always exercised a soothing influence over my feelings ; and having a fine voice, I had great pleasure in singing the beautiful hymns and chants of our church,—a pleasure enhanced by the knowledge that my voice was much admired by the whole congregation. Mrs. Foster valued it highly too, reckoning my singing in church a good advertisement of her school, though I did not teach singing ; and when I had caught cold, and was forced to be silent, she would smile graciously as the clergyman, overtaking our procession on the way home, would say with a bow and smile in my direction, ‘We missed Miss Maurice’s voice this morning.’

I had gradually become so much of an automaton, that when the prayers were

ended and the sermon began, I could sit sideways at the end of the pew, my eyes fixed on the row of young people committed to my care, looking at them, but not seeing them; my thoughts far away, but keeping my charge in order as effectually as a scarecrow frightens the crows from the corn, or the blackbirds from the fruit. And the conclusion of the brief sermon would often rouse me from a warm dream of the past, to the cold, hard realities of the present. On these occasions my thoughts generally wandered back to my own dear home, where, an only spoiled child, I had been the light of my mother's eyes, and the pride of my father's heart. Alas! I had no home now; for though I regularly spent my holidays at the house of an aunt, who was always very kind to me, she had a large family of her own, and, properly speaking, I had no home but Raspberry House. Young as I was (not

quite three and twenty), I felt as though I had already lived two lives, the first ending and the second beginning when I came to Raspberry House ; how or when the second was to end, I neither knew nor cared. For I had grown cold and callous. Six years of patient, laborious music teaching had well nigh deadened the warm feelings of my young heart, my affections were withered, and a weary stoical indifference, foreign to my nature, had taken possession of me. Mrs. Foster said I was a good teacher, and I suppose she was right. I was patient and painstaking, and taught my pupils to play with great execution, and to keep capital time ; but I failed to impart to their playing the exquisite touch and delicious expression for which my own was said to be remarkable. I dare say my pupils liked me well enough. I never scolded or got cross with them ; but they were not fond of me. I

treated them too much as mere machines, from whom it was my duty to extract certain results ; and I am persuaded now, that had I mingled more love with my teaching, many a young heart would have bounded to meet mine, and the tender emotion thus kindled, would have been communicated to their fingers, and have found expression on the instrument. I always brightened up considerably during the holidays : home influences, and the society of my aunt and cousins softened me, and did me good ; and I generally returned to Raspberry House determined to conquer the intense weariness which oppressed me there, and resolved that I would be something better than a mere musical machine. But when the old jingling began again, and I had nothing but crotchets and quavers, black keys and white keys, before my eyes all day and every day long, I lost all my aspirations, and became

sad, and stupid, and weary as of old. But a change was coming, though I knew it not; a bright spot of green was about to enliven the dull desert of my life; *my* prison, like SILVIO PELLICO'S, was to have its '*Picciola*.'





CHAPTER II.

MY PICCIOLA.

'And she sits and gazes at me,
With those deep and tender eyes,
Like the stars, so still and saint-like,
Looking downward from the skies.'

—LONGFELLOW.



ONE morning Mrs. Foster informed me that having the prospect of several additional music pupils, and my time being already fully occupied, she had resolved to engage another governess to assist me.

'I have already heard of a young lady who, I think, may suit,' said she, 'Miss Lucy Smith; and if my further inquiries prove satisfactory, I intend engaging her at once.'

She has, I understand, been brought up amongst Dissenters, which is certainly a great objection; but as she is quite willing to attend church with us, I think it need not be an insuperable one.'

Here Mrs. Foster paused, apparently for my opinion, but I said nothing; it was no business of mine, though I remember wondering what *dissent* had to do with teaching the piano!

'She is an orphan,' continued she, 'and this is her first situation; but if she only fill it half as well as Miss Maurice has done hers, I shall have no cause to repent giving her a trial. I like *ladies* to teach *my* young people,' she added with a complimentary smile.

I bowed the acknowledgment I saw was expected for this speech, and was leaving the room, when Mrs. Foster called me back.

'I forgot to mention,' said she, 'that Miss Smith will occupy the small bedroom ad-

joining yours, which you know has been vacant for some time. As it has two doors, you may, if you choose, shut up that between the rooms ;' which I did that very day, determined to keep out the intruder on my privacy ! For, strange to tell of in a boarding school, I had always had a bedroom to myself, and had latterly also appropriated to my own use the small chamber now destined for Miss Smith ; Raspberry House being an old-fashioned roomy mansion, and Mrs. Foster a determined enemy to overcrowding,—a practice which brought its own reward in the immunity from fevers and other contagious disorders enjoyed by her household, and the reputation for general good health which Raspberry House had gained. I had listened with my usual indifference to Mrs. Foster's communication, but I did speculate a little on the new-comer's name. ' Lucy ' I thought sweet and pretty,

but 'Smith' so very common; would she be like her Christian or her surname? When she arrived, I was summoned to Mrs. Foster's presence to be introduced to her. She was a small, childish, fairy-looking creature, with long fair curls, and large blue eyes, which I *felt*, rather than saw, glance eagerly at me as I entered the room.

'Allow me to introduce Miss Smith to you, Miss Maurice,' said Mrs. Foster; 'as she will be more immediately under your care, I look to you to make Raspberry House agreeable to her.'

'Certainly, ma'am,' said I coldly, feeling rather bored than otherwise. Turning to take a look of my new charge, I found those large eyes fixed on me with an anxious scrutinizing gaze, under which I blushed in a manner very unusual with me. Had their verdict been unfavourable, my future life might have been very different; but they beamed on me with

an expression of pleasure and satisfaction, and from that moment I loved Lucy Smith. Loved her! I adored, I idolized her! She broke through the thick gathered crust of years, the ice melted, and my withered affections bloomed and blossomed once more under the sunny influence of her society. She was the sweetest little creature I ever came in contact with; she was all honey and no gall; and before she had been six weeks in the house, had won more love than I had in six years. Not a little one fell and hurt herself but ran instinctively to 'Miss Smith' for help and sympathy; whilst the elder girls consulted her as to the fashion of their hair-dressing, the trimming of their dresses, and other young-lady matters, about which they would no more have thought of consulting me than Mrs. Foster herself. 'Wait till she has been six years here,' thought I; but I was not jealous of Lucy. Oh, no! I loved

her too well to grudge the love she obtained from or bestowed upon others.

It was on a Monday she arrived, and in a day or two we had become bosom friends, called each other 'Lucy' and 'Harry' (my Christian name is Harriet), and opening the door of communication, made each free of both rooms. I longed for Sunday, that I might have leisure to talk to her, and enjoy more of her company; but when Sunday came, I found Lucy silent and absent, if not sad.

'Don't you like Sunday, Lucy?' I whispered, as we walked to church together, for she had kept close by me, Mrs. Foster having, I suppose, forgotten to appoint her a place in our procession. 'I always like it,' said I; 'one gets time to think, away from those horrid pianos.'

'Yes,' she replied. 'I like the Sabbath, one gets time to think.'

I felt there was some material difference between Lucy's 'time to think' and mine; and not knowing how to reply, wisely kept silence. She sat next me in church, and was very quiet and attentive; but I could not hear her voice in the responses, though I did hear occasionally a very earnest low-breathed 'Amen,' more especially when the prayer was one for forgiveness of sin.

'Could Lucy have done something very wrong? Was she indeed a great sinner?' thought I, in consternation (*I*, who had the moment before confessed myself a '*miserable sinner*'); but one glance at the fair, open brow, the truthful, blue eyes, and the sweet, almost childish expression of her mouth, banished the suspicion at once and for ever from my mind, leaving a feeling of shame behind, that I could have entertained it for a moment; and when the sermon began, my thoughts wandered away as

usual, and I forgot all about Lucy and her Amens.

‘Why didn’t you repeat the responses, Lucy?’ I carelessly asked, as we walked home from church. She gave me a quick questioning glance, but said nothing, and thinking she had not heard me, I repeated the question; and then the answer came, very low, but very sweet and solemn, ‘God is a spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.’ The words, and perhaps the tone, brought back to me the well-remembered music of my mother’s voice; and a rush of tender emotion, such as I had not experienced for years, overpowered and silenced me. I knew they were in the Bible; but totally ignorant of the connection in which they stood, I knew not who had spoken them, or where to find them; I resolved, however, to look for them the first opportunity, being

ashamed to display my ignorance by asking Lucy.

Raspberry House was famous for its 'religious instruction,' which always held a prominent place in our advertisements; and the distance from church being thought too great to admit of our attending twice, the Sunday evenings were devoted to Catechism learning and repeating, exercises from which the Music Governess was allowed to escape, but I was expected to be down stairs in good time to lead the singing when the household assembled for prayers. So I had always enjoyed an interval of freedom, which was generally spent in idle musing or in sleep. But now the case was different, I had got a companion; and it was with a thrill of pleasure that I invited Lucy to come and sit beside me in my room, showing her how to make herself comfortable, by putting her feet on one chair whilst

she sat on another,—a position which would have shocked Mrs. Foster exceedingly, had she seen it. We sat reading quietly for some time, and I searched my Bible in vain for Lucy's text, till she broke the silence by asking how I had liked the sermon.

'Oh, much as usual,' I replied, completely nonplussed, not having heard a single word of it.

'Oh, indeed,' she said, sadly; 'I hoped to-day might be an exception; it seemed to me just a well-read moral essay.'

'It was not our own minister who preached to-day,' said I, suddenly remembering that a stranger had occupied the pulpit.

'And is your own minister a good preacher?' she asked, with an appearance of eager interest, which much surprised me.

'Oh, beautiful!' said I, knowing nothing at all about the matter. She gave me one

of her quick glances, and I inwardly hoped from the bottom of my heart that he would justify my encomium, resolving I would keep broad awake next Sabbath, and be able to give my opinion of the sermon as well as Lucy.

Lucy always called the day of rest '*Sabbath*,' and it sounded so sweet from her lips that I began unconsciously to follow her example. By and by we both fell asleep; but I awoke first, roused, I suppose, by Lucy muttering in her sleep. I bent eagerly forward to listen, thinking how I would make her laugh afterwards at what she had said, but I could not make sense of it; she appeared to be repeating lines of hymns, and fragments of passages of Scripture, all mixed up together in an incoherent jumble. Gradually, however, her voice became distinct and clear, and I made out a whole verse,—it was this:

'Oh for a strong, a lasting faith,
To credit what the Almighty saith,
To embrace the message of his Son,
And call the joys of heaven our own !

'Strange girl,' thought I; but the sound of her own voice awoke her, and she opened her eyes; they were full of tears, and had a longing, wistful expression in them which I had not observed before, but often saw afterwards. She blushed when she saw my wondering stare; but the bell ringing at that moment for prayers, we both started up, and ran down stairs, smoothing our hair and rumpled dresses into something like boarding-school decorum, and I never told Lucy what she had said in her sleep. Next Sabbath I kept my attention fixed upon the preacher; but found it hard work, though it was but a short sermon after all. It was all about justification and sanctification—about the Christian warfare and the Christian walk—about the outward practical life of holiness,

being the natural result of the spiritual life within ; and I did not understand one-half of it, and yawned till I was thoroughly ashamed of myself. Mademoiselle, who sat at the end of the pew behind, gave me a smart little tap on the shoulder with her fan, and handing me her scent-bottle, whispered, ' Qu'avez vous ? ' which made me giggle, and feel more ashamed of myself than ever. I stole a glance at Lucy ; but she was listening with a rapt attention, which showed she both understood and enjoyed what the preacher was saying, and I came to the conclusion that she must be a very strange girl indeed to relish such dry stuff. ' How did you like the sermon, dear ? ' I asked that evening, after I had waited in vain for her to introduce the subject.

' I thought it excellent, most excellent ! ' said she ; ' he came quite up to your report of him, Harry.'

I blushed crimson at this speech, and hastily changed the subject, fearing she might discover the nakedness of the land; and next Sabbath I went back to my old listless, wandering thoughts, and never again asked Lucy's opinion of the sermon.





CHAPTER III.

THE CONFIRMATION.

'Then ceremony leads her bigots forth,
Prepar'd to fight for shadows of no worth ;
While truths on which eternal things depend,
Find not, or hardly find, a single friend.'

COWPER.



FEW weeks after Lucy's arrival, we were put into a state of great excitement, for the bishop was expected, and intended holding a confirmation in our church, at which several of our young ladies were to be confirmed ; and there was a great deal of catechism learning and repeating going on ('just as though it was always Sunday,' I heard one little girl remark) ; and our clergyman came daily to Raspberry

House ; and there was much laughing, and talking, and dressmaking, and fitting ; for the girls were all to be dressed alike, and all in white ; and I have no doubt each young heart was anxious to look as lovely as possible on the occasion, for many friends of the pupils and the *elite* of the town were expected to be present. Mrs. Foster sent for Lucy, and told her this would be a good opportunity for her being confirmed, with a view to taking the sacrament, and becoming a member of the church. But Lucy quietly told her she had no intention of joining the church at present ; and Mademoiselle, who happened to be in the room at the time, told me afterwards that it was very amusing to see Mrs. Foster's indignant surprise at her commands being disputed, and Lucy's no less indignant astonishment at being dictated to in the matter. At length, finding remonstrance and coaxing equally vain, Mrs.

Foster sent for me, thinking, I suppose, that I might have some influence with Lucy. When I went in, Lucy was standing like a culprit before Mrs. Foster, who was saying :

‘I tell you, child, you *must* do it. I never had a governess before who was not a member of the church ; it’s against all the rules of Raspberry House ; and I never doubted, when I engaged you, but that you would become one, when you had for a time attended church with us, and had received some necessary instruction.’

‘Indeed, ma’am, I cannot do it,’ said Lucy, firmly.

‘What possible objection can you have ?’ continued Mrs. Foster. ‘Your father was, I understand, a Dissenter. Was he in the habit of talking to you against our church ?’

‘No, ma’am ; I never heard him say anything against it,’ said Lucy in a low tone.

‘Then what is it?’ cried her tormentor.

‘Do you dislike the liturgy?’

‘Oh no!’ said Lucy, clasping her hands.

‘I think it is *so* beautiful.’

‘Then let me have no more of this nonsense, Miss Smith,’ said Mrs. Foster in a gentler tone. ‘Miss Maurice, my love,’ she added, speaking with extra complaisance to me, in consequence of her displeasure at Lucy, ‘I hope you will give this foolish girl all the assistance possible in her preparation; and, Miss Smith, I hope you will be teachable and attentive, and not disgrace us. Raspberry House has always been famous for the *religion* of its young ladies. I doubt you will find her very ignorant,’ said she, turning to me again.

I saw Lucy’s lip curl contemptuously at this speech; but she only said, imploringly:

‘Indeed, ma’am, I cannot do it. Please don’t urge me any more.’

‘One would think I asked you to do something wrong, child,’ cried Mrs. Foster, angrily, ‘instead of a necessary religious observance, which every Christian should be proud to do.’

‘But I am not a Christian,’ said Lucy, driven desperate, her eyes filling with tears, which I saw she kept from flowing with difficulty.

‘Not a Christian! What can the girl mean?’ ejaculated Mrs. Foster, with a look of blank amazement, which (surprised as I was myself) almost upset my gravity.

‘What do you mean, Miss Smith? Were you not baptized when you were a baby?’

‘Yes, ma’am,’ said Lucy, almost crying.

‘Then how can you cast such a slur on your parents as to say you are not a Christian?’ said Mrs. Foster, looking at the little heathen with horror. ‘Let me have no more of this nonsense. If I had known you were

such an obstinate girl, I never would have engaged you ; and if you persist in your disobedience, I shall be obliged to part with you. Do, my dear Miss Maurice,' she added, 'try and bring her to a better state of mind.'

We left the room together, and Lucy flew upstairs, while I followed more leisurely, at a loss what to say or do.

'Not a Christian !' I said to myself. 'Then what am I ?'

It was certainly the first time I had doubted my Christianity ; for, had I not been born of Christian parents in a Christian country ? and was not I a member of the church ? But my reflections were put a stop to by Mademoiselle, who overtook me on the stairs. She had, during the foregoing scene, been standing behind Mrs. Foster's chair, and had discomposed me much by her pantomimic gestures ; clasping her hands and raising her eyes in an ecstasy of admiration every time !

spoke, and clenching her fist and frowning severely during Mrs. Foster's speeches. Poor Mademoiselle did not love Mrs. Foster, who annoyed her by the very loud tones in which she invariably addressed her, evidently labouring under the impression, that the louder she spoke to a foreigner the better she would be understood.

'She scream, scream at me, as if I was deaf,' Mademoiselle would say. But she got her revenge at meal-times, for that French, and French only was to be spoken at table, was a standing rule in Raspberry House ; and watching her opportunity, she would direct a rapid stream of talk to Mrs. Foster, which so bewildered and confused her, that, losing both temper and self-possession before her pupils, she would cry, angrily, 'Taisez vous !' to the Frenchwoman's great delight. Mademoiselle and I had always been very good friends in an indifferent way ; but Lucy had taken



“I found Lucy lying on the floor of my room sobbing convulsively.”

—Page 39.

all our hearts by storm, and the French governess was no exception to the general rule.

‘Ah, Miss Maurice!’ said she, as she overtook me on the stairs, ‘*she’ll* go to heaven faster than *she*,’ and she pointed first upstairs, and then down.

‘Hush!’ cried I, afraid Mrs. Foster might be following, and hear her loud whisper.

‘Have no fear,’ she coolly replied; ‘I shut the door safe behind me. Ah, Miss Maurice, Miss Smith has the root of the matter in her. As for Madame Fostare—poof!’

We had reached the door of my room, and I saw she would have liked to go in with me, but was too polite to intrude when not invited.

‘Give my love to the little martare,’ said she, ‘and tell her to hold fast!’

I found Lucy lying on the floor of my room, sobbing convulsively. Grieved and

frightened, I knelt down beside her, and laying her head on my bosom, soothed and caressed her as though she had been a child. Gradually the sobs ceased, and she put her lips to mine in token of gratitude.

‘Must I leave you, my dear, my only friend?’ said she, sobbing again.

‘Lucy darling,’ said I, inexpressibly flattered by this speech, ‘you never surely would dream of leaving your situation for such a trifle?’

‘Trifle, Harry!’ said she, lifting her head, and gazing at me with a look of wonder, in which I thought I detected a shade of pity, under which I winced. ‘It is no trifle; and if Mrs. Foster persist, I must go. But I do not think she will,’ she added more cheerfully. ‘She was angry when she said it just now.’

‘I hope she knows her own interest better,’ said I; ‘she can appreciate a good

teacher. I heard her telling Miss Brown yesterday, that between Miss Maurice's execution and Miss Smith's taste, Raspberry House would produce better players than any other school in England.'

'Did Mrs. Foster really say that?' said Lucy, her eyes sparkling through her tears; but an important rap at the door made us start to our feet, and sent Lucy into her own room to hide her tear-stained cheeks.

It was Miss Brown, our English governess, a very precise, finical young lady, held in high estimation by Mrs. Foster.

'Is Miss Smith here?' said she. 'Mrs. Foster sent me to have some conversation with her.'

I invited her to take a seat, and ran to tell Lucy, expecting another outburst, and a flat refusal to see Miss Brown. But the little lady was now quite composed; and by the time she had sponged her face, brushed her

hair, and shaken out her rumpled dress, nobody could have guessed anything had been wrong. 'Still waters run deep,' thought I, as I followed her meekly into my room.

She bowed to Miss Brown, and sat down opposite to her with a look which said plainly, 'To what am I indebted for this honour?'

Miss Brown looked a little confused, and cleared her throat (she was famous for her loud hems, for mimicking which the girls were constantly getting into trouble). 'Miss Smith, my dear,' said she, 'I understand from Mrs. Foster that you have refused to be confirmed by the bishop, which is certainly a most extraordinary circumstance; indeed, to hear of such a thing is quite a novelty in this age—this religious age.'

Miss Brown paused, but Lucy only twirled the tassels of her apron, and waited for what should come next.

Miss Brown's colour rose. 'What possible objection can you have?' said she. 'Everybody takes the sacrament, except bad characters, who are very properly rejected by the minister. It is a right thing, a proper thing, a religious thing, which nobody but a heathen would refuse to do. You would not like to be thought a heathen, my dear Miss Smith—or a sinner,' she added, with a coaxing smile.

'We are all sinners,' said Lucy gravely.

'Indeed!' said Miss Brown angrily. 'Speak for yourself, Miss Smith. Pray, of what sin can you accuse me?'

With a sad and pitying glance, Lucy hesitatingly replied, "'This is the condemnation, that men have loved darkness rather than the light.'"

'I suppose you mean that for me!' cried Miss Brown, fairly losing temper; 'but I always liked the light. It is only bad people

who like the darkness to cover their evil deeds; and I never was bad, and don't intend ever to be,' and she flounced out of the room in a perfect storm of righteous indignation, leaving me convulsed with laughter.

'I wonder you can laugh, Harry; such deplorable ignorance would rather make me cry,' said Lucy indignantly.

Now I was not laughing so much at Miss Brown's ignorance as at her odd ways; and with Lucy's look of pity at myself still undigested on my mind, I said something, —I don't remember what,—but I know we quarrelled and said sharp things to each other. I think I called her a 'conceited thing;' and she told me I knew 'nothing at all about the matter;' and we went to bed without the usual kiss, or saying good night. Whenever my head was on the pillow, I repented and wished we had made

it up ; and I longed for the morning, that I might confess my fault and ask Lucy's forgiveness. I tossed about for some time, but must have been dozing, for I awoke in a great fright with some one coming into the room.

'Who's there ?' cried I, visions of robbers, ghosts, and other horrors rushing through my mind.

'Hush, Harry dear,' whispered Lucy at my bedside, 'I could not sleep till I had asked your forgiveness.'

'And I *so* wished to ask yours, Lucy darling,' said I, half crying and putting my arms round her neck ; and we both cried and kissed and hugged each other, and I helped Lucy into my bed, and we slept together that night, and never quarrelled again.

Lucy was right, Mrs. Foster did not part with her ; but she did not yield the point without a struggle, and, finding her

remonstrances vain, she besought the clergyman to converse with, and try to convince, her refractory governess. But Lucy was shy and reserved with him, and beyond her firm determination not to be confirmed, he could make nothing of her. During the time the controversy lasted, Mademoiselle was in a constant *furoré*; she quoted Miss Smith's opinion on all occasions and on all subjects, as an authority not to be disputed, and she was always laying hold of me in secret corners to express her sentiments. She called Lucy 'The little Puritan' and 'The sweet Huguenot,' though from what curious association of ideas I never could discover. 'Ah! mon amie,' she would say, 'Miss Smith must have *martare* blood in her veins; had she lived in the time of your Bloody Marie, she would have been sent to the stake, and she would have gone—yes, gone in one minute!'

Mademoiselle had perhaps *martare* blood in her own veins, though, from being a native of France, she was suspected by the whole school of being a Jesuit in disguise, whereas, from the upright simplicity of her character, she was more likely to be imposed upon than to act the part of an impostor. But though Lucy was not dismissed, Mrs. Foster showed her permanent displeasure by a marked coldness of manner, very trying to the girl's affectionate heart. As for Miss Brown, she kept at a safe distance from the little sinner, and gathered her righteous robes around her like the Pharisees of old. But Lucy's behaviour made more impression on me than on any of them. I had always considered myself a very good Christian; I had been confirmed at the usual age, and had regularly partaken of the sacrament; I knew many people who did the same, whom I did not consider as nearly so good as myself; and

if at these communion seasons I prayed at all, it was in the true Pharisaical spirit, 'Lord, I thank Thee I am not as others!' But Lucy had made a living reality of what had been to me but a dead form; and when, after the confirmation, I partook of the sacrament, it was with a feeling of guilty responsibility I had never experienced before. The Sabbath, too, which had formerly been my only happy day, now became the most miserable in the week, for I had found Lucy's text, and knew who had spoken these solemn words,—even He, at whose name I had so often bowed, insulting Him with the mockery of outward devotion, whilst I denied Him the true spiritual worship of the heart. Gladly would I have now refrained from singing in church, or repeating the responses; but the dread of appearing singular, and of being questioned as to the cause of my silence, forced me to do as usual, and I was miser-

able! I had been religiously educated, and many old feelings and convictions, hitherto smothered or forgotten, were roused within me, and I lost my old careless indifference, without finding a resting-place to supply the want. I listened eagerly and attentively to the sermon every Sabbath; but though our clergyman depicted very faithfully the state of alienation from God in which I had found myself to be, and no less faithfully the state of reconciliation in which, I have no doubt, he was himself, he never made plain (at least to my perceptions, but they were dark enough at the time) how to get from the one state to the other. I longed to converse with Lucy; but felt a natural repugnance to speak of my own feelings, more especially that she seemed impenetrably reserved on the subject of religion, and now always spent the Sabbath evenings reading in her own room. I believe that during this brief period I read more of

the Bible than during all my previous life. For though I never neglected to read a chapter daily, in fulfilment of a promise made to my mother when I was a child (a promise kept in the letter but not in the spirit), I often shut the book without knowing what I had been reading, my eyes having faithfully followed the printed characters, whilst my mind was vacant or wandering.





CHAPTER IV.

THE OPERA.

'O Music, sphere-descended maid,
Friend of pleasure, wisdom's aid,
Why, goddess, why, to us denied,
Lay'st thou thy ancient lyre aside?
Where is thy native, simple heart,
Devote to virtue, fancy, art?
Arise, as in that elder time,
Warm, energetic, chaste, sublime!
'Tis said, and I believe the tale,
Thy humblest reed could more prevail,
Had more of strength, diviner rage
Than all which charms this laggard age.'

COLLINS.

BUT, alas! my impressions were neither deep nor lasting, a new cause of excitement speedily banishing every serious thought from my mind. A celebrated opera company having announced

their intention of honouring our town with a visit, the young ladies who boarded in Raspberry House were again put into a state of excitement; and, hoping Mrs. Foster would procure tickets for at least one performance, they could talk or think of nothing but the opera! Passionately fond of music, I had often wished to hear some of the fine singers of the day, but had never had the opportunity; and now, hoping I might be fortunate enough to get a ticket, I fairly lost my head, and became as anxious and excited as any child amongst them; I thought of the opera by day, and dreamed of it by night, though I never spoke about it, not even to Lucy. At length Mrs. Foster put the matter beyond a doubt.

‘Young ladies,’ said she one morning, as we were leaving the breakfast table, ‘I am happy to inform you that I have secured tickets for the opera to be performed on the

10th, and I intend to take as many of you as are old enough to appreciate it. I would like you to have at least one opportunity of hearing really good music whilst residing at Raspberry House. I would on no account encourage my young people to attend the theatre; but the opera is different; it is a refined, elegant amusement, and may conduce much to the refinement and elevation of your musical taste. Two of the governesses shall accompany us,' she added as we left the room.

'Heard you her?' whispered Mademoiselle to Lucy and me, as we went upstairs. 'The opera a *refined, elegant amusement*—not so bad as the play—bah! she knows better; it's worse and worse, the music so enchanting it gilds the immorality! But she think it genteel and fashionable, and all that!'

When we reached the schoolroom we found the elder girls dancing about in a state of

ecstasy, whilst the young ones were debating in corners who was and who was not old enough to go to the opera.

‘If *my* mamma knew, *I* would not get!’ cried a gay romp, as she waltzed past us, half beside herself with joy.

‘You’d better keep *mum*, then, Miss Jones,’ cried another; ‘if Mrs. *Fos* hears that, she’ll keep you at home with the little ones.’

‘As though I’d stay!’ laughed Miss Jones, giving her a sly push as she whirled past her.

‘Such a fuss about an opera!’ remarked a languishing miss; ‘why, I’ve been there a many times!’

‘Which has not improved your grammar, though it may have *refined* and *elevated* your musical taste,’ said a wag, with a capital imitation of Mrs. Foster’s tone.

‘Such ’orrid manners,’ said Miss Burt; ‘I expect you were never even at a shilling

concert. My mamma has a box at the opera.'

'I *expect* she has,' retorted the mimic, imitating Miss Burt in turn, 'a *muff* box, —when you are in it,' she added in a lower tone.

The girls who were near laughed; but Mademoiselle checked the mimic, and looked so shocked at her rudeness that the girl blushed and hung her head.

'Pray, Miss Jones, is your mamma a Methodist?' asked a little girl who had been listening attentively.

'A Methodist!' cried another child. 'Why, *we* are Methodists, and papa takes us all to the pantomime every Christmas!'

'I did not mean just a Methodist in that way,' said the first little speaker hesitatingly; 'I meant—I meant a very good sort of person. You know what I mean.'

'Yes, I know what you mean,' replied

Miss Jones with flashing eyes, and caring more for the listeners than for the childish questioner; 'and I don't care to tell you that my mamma *is* a Methodist of your kind, for she's a real Christian, if ever there was one,' and she turned hastily away to hide her tears.

'That is right,' said Mademoiselle, laying her hand kindly on her shoulder; 'always speak the truth right out, and *nevare* mind the nicknames. There be only two sorts of people in the world—those who are Christians and those who are not. There are many who call themselves Christian,—*Episcopals*, *Presbytares*, *Bapteests*, *Methodeests*, and I know not how many more; but *that* does not make them Christians. In my country we have great talk of Catholic and Protestant; but there are many Protestants who are not Christians, and there be some Catholics who are—at least I hope so,' she added, with a

deep sigh. Mademoiselle's eloquence was put a stop to by the entrance of Mrs. Foster, and we dispersed to our various duties ; but as I left the room, I saw Miss Jones giving her an affectionate hug, and Lucy casting on her a glance which I thought ample compensation for the tittering of some of the girls.

'Don't you wish you may get a ticket, Lucy ?' I asked, as we parted in the lobby.

'No, I don't wish to go,' she said.

'Not wish to go to the opera !' cried I ;
'and you so fond of music.'

'No, I really don't wish to go. I'm of Mademoiselle's opinion, it's worse and worse,' said she, with a merry laugh.

'Bah !' said I, 'never mind Mademoiselle's opinion. I only wish the governesses were all going, and then we would both be sure.'

'Well, I hope you'll get a ticket, Harry dear,' said she, giving me a kiss.

Mrs. Foster decided the matter by lot,

late that evening. Miss Brown got the one ticket and Lucy the other. I saw Mrs. Foster would have liked me to have got Lucy's; but there was no help for it, neither could I help a bitter pang, as much at Lucy's undisguised joy, as at my own disappointment.

'Little hypocrite! and she pretended she did not wish to go; thought it wrong, forsooth!' thought I, as I went wearily upstairs, feeling as though my '*picciola*' had withered, alas! all too soon. But before I reached the top, Lucy came running after me, and, breathless with eager haste, almost pushed me into the room before her.

'Here, Harry,' cried she, 'here's the ticket. I'm so glad I got it, to have the pleasure of giving it to you,' and she capered and danced about the room like a mad creature, having forced the ticket into my hand.

'But, Lucy dear, I can't take it; indeed I

can't,' said I, much ashamed of my unjust suspicions.

'But you must take it,' said she, still capering about. 'Have not I told Mrs. Foster? and she gave me the first smile she has given me since the confirmation.'

'But, Lucy,' remonstrated I, 'are you sure it's not for my sake? do you really not wish to go?'

'Really and truly,' she said, laughing; 'not that I don't care for the music,' she added, with something that sounded very like a sigh. My further remonstrances were put a stop to by the entrance of Mademoiselle, who walked up to Lucy, saying—

'Go you to this opera, Miss Smith?'

'No,' said Lucy, demurely, 'I have given my ticket to Miss Maurice.'

'Ah, that be right,' said she, stooping to kiss Lucy (for she was half as high again); 'but I did have fear, you looked so pleased

when you got the ticket. Miss Maurice and Miss Brown shall go, and you and I shall stay at home with the children,' she added with provoking complacency.

'And so what is bad for Lucy is good for me!' said I, considerably piqued at being so coolly thrown overboard.

'No, not that,' replied Mademoiselle, knitting her eyebrows, as she always did when she found a difficulty in expressing herself, 'not that; but if she go, she go against her *convections*. That's it,' said she, looking round in triumph.

'What would you have done, Mademoiselle, had you been fortunate enough to get a ticket?' asked I.

'Followed Miss Smith's example, and given it to Miss Brown,' she answered promptly. 'Vous vous trompez,' she added, with an arch glance, which showed she saw through my suspicion of sour grapes.

‘I hope next time you pay me a visit, you won’t forget to knock,’ said I, as she was leaving the room.

‘I did knock, but you were talk, talking, and did not hear,’ said she, much shocked at being accused of a breach of politeness. ‘Je vous demande pardon, mon amie;’ and she went away hanging her head, in her usual fashion when ashamed, but returned the next moment to say, ‘Qu’avez vous?’ so coaxingly, that I was in turn ashamed of myself, and, humbly begging her pardon, we parted good friends.

‘Perhaps you are right after all, Harry,’ said Lucy, when we were again alone; ‘it is not right for me to put it in your power to go where I would not go myself.’

‘Nonsense!’ cried I. ‘I don’t go against my *convections*, you know.’

‘Well, I suppose somebody must go,’ said she with a sigh.

‘To be sure!’ cried I, gaily; ‘but, Lucy dear, I wonder what I should wear; we must all be in full dress, you know.’

‘We’ll settle that to-morrow,’ said Lucy, yawning. ‘I’m ready for my bed now.’

And so we went to bed, though I would much rather have remained up half the night, to turn out my wardrobe, and hold a solemn consultation over its resources. Full of remorseful tenderness at having suspected her even for a moment, I could not help calling out, after we had been in bed for some time, to tell her how much I loved her.

‘Dear Harry, that’s nothing new,’ she cried, laughing merrily; ‘I wish you had kept it till the morning, I was just falling asleep.’

But I could not sleep; and, assured by her soft breathing (distinctly heard in the stillness of the house, the door between our rooms being always left open) that Lucy

was fast asleep, I got up, and by the light of the moon took out dress after dress, and examined and pondered and meditated, till, chilled and shivering, I was glad to get into bed again, and at length fell asleep to dream of the expected pleasure. I dreamt I was at the opera, and listening to the exquisite singing of the prima donna, whose features bore a remarkable resemblance to those of Lucy Smith; when suddenly she became the real Lucy; her lips moved, but no sound came from them; but, I thought, I knew well she was repeating the same hymn I had heard once before :

‘ Oh, for a strong, a lasting faith ! ’

and as I saw the sad, wistful expression of her eyes, I burst into tears, and awoke sobbing bitterly, only to fall asleep, and dream the same over again.

The morning of the 10th dawned at last, and there was running and racing within

and without Raspberry House, dressmakers and milliners coming and going, and messengers of various kinds; whilst within doors a holiday had been proclaimed; and there was great fitting on of new dresses and opera cloaks; the maids running about from room to room, evidently sharing in, and enjoying the excitement. The hair-dresser arrived at an early hour, and we all had the benefit of his services in turn, and I am sure he must have had a hard day's work of it.

Dear Lucy made herself my slave for the time being: she walked three miles before breakfast to procure a bouquet for me; she placed her small stock of jewellery entirely at my disposal; she arranged and re-arranged the trimming of my dress, so as to please my somewhat fastidious taste; and she patiently undid one half of the *perruquier's* work, he having left me under a mountain of *friz*,

painful to behold. I had her all to myself; for Mrs. Foster, liberal in everything (always excepting the pianos), did not make waiting-maids of her governesses; but, notwithstanding, we were not without interruptions.

‘Dear Miss Smith,’ one girl would cry, as Lucy opened my room door in answer to her knock, ‘do look at my dress. Here, see, the dressmaker has sent it home fully an inch too tight; what shall I do?’ Then another would come, half crying, ‘Only fancy, Miss Smith, such a fright the barber has made of my back hair; just look at it!’ or it would be, ‘Please, Miss Smith, which colour of ribbon do you think suits this dress best—pink or blue?’ And Lucy advised, and coaxed, and soothed, till at last we locked the door; and, turning a deaf ear to all petitioners, I finished my toilette in peace. Mademoiselle was in great request all day, being supposed to have by

nature a taste in dress; even Mrs. Foster condescended to ask her opinion, and profit by her advice. And, it must be confessed, our French governess was quite in her element, even vainly attempting to add a few graceful finishing touches to Miss Brown's toilette, whose spare, angular figure resisted all her efforts to make it elegant or graceful.

'Ah, *you* will do!' said she, smiling approbation at my appearance, as Lucy and I met her on the stairs on our way to the hall, where we were all to assemble before setting out, having quite a procession of carriages. 'You will do; as for *she*, she look for all the world as though she have just swallowed the poker!' And she shrugged her shoulders, and pointed to Miss Brown stiffly and slowly descending, afraid of disarranging her finery, and holding her dress high enough to display a robust pair of ankles. 'But wait one

moment,' said Mademoiselle; 'I see you want something;' and running off to her room, she speedily returned with a very handsome opera-glass and pretty fan. 'Now,' said she, presenting them with a low curtsy, 'now you be *parfaite*.' Grateful for her kindness, I thanked her warmly, being charmed with both articles. 'Pooh!' said she, giving me a gentle push, 'see you don't go and break them.'

'So you keep an opera-glass, Mademoiselle, though you think it wrong to go to the opera,' I remarked, as we stood in the hall preparatory to driving off. She looked inquiringly in my face, and knitted her brows, and, after a little hesitation, whispered—

'I use it in the days of my folly, mon amie; but I have now learned the meaning of this, "Mais celle qui vit dans les plaisirs, est mort en vivant."'

'Thank you, Mademoiselle,' said I, curtsey-

ing low with mock humility ; 'it's not much of that sort of pleasure I get, and I feel all alive just now, at any rate. Good-bye, darling,' added I, kissing Lucy, and wincing under the gravity of her looks, for she had heard Mademoiselle's text and my reply. 'That nasty Frenchwoman and her text,' thought I, as I sat in the carriage with three of the pupils, waiting our turn to drive off. She and Lucy were standing together, Lucy leaning affectionately on Mademoiselle, surrounded by a group of children, who were striving who should get nearest Miss Smith. Already irritated, the good understanding evidently subsisting between them (an understanding in which I felt there was something in which I did not participate) roused all my jealous feelings, and I felt inclined to throw Mademoiselle's opera-glass and fan out of the carriage window ; but we drove off, whilst she bowed and kissed her hand till we were

out of sight, and I speedily forgot every jealous feeling in the delights of the opera. I should mention that Miss Jones did not accompany us. She thought better of it, like a good sensible girl as she was, and wrote to her mother, telling her of the intended visit to the opera, and asking her permission to go. Mrs. Jones, however, left it to herself to decide; at the same time giving her own opinion of the species of amusement very decidedly.

‘What shall I do, Miss Smith?’ said she, having asked Lucy to read the letter. ‘You see mamma does not exactly forbid me going.’

‘No,’ said Lucy; ‘but, I think, were I in your place, I would forego twenty operas rather than vex such a mother.’

And Miss Jones took Lucy’s advice and stayed at home, to the great joy of the girl who got her ticket. She had not courage,

however, to see us off, but shut herself into her own room, even (as she told me long afterwards) putting her fingers in her ears, to shut out the rattle of the carriages as they drove off one after another !

I returned home that night in a state of ecstasy, at peace with myself and all the world, scarcely feeling the ground on which I trod, every sense steeped in the delicious melody of *Roberto*, which had made my very flesh creep with its ravishing music. I stole softly into Lucy's room, hoping she might be awake, that I might communicate to her the pleasurable sensations I experienced ; but she was fast asleep ; and as I gazed on the pure, sweet face, I felt it to be discordant with my present excited feelings. Carefully shading the light I carried, I turned away with a sigh, and was softly leaving the room, when I saw a small French Testament, which I recognised as Mademoiselle's, lying on the

table beside Lucy's Bible, which I knew she always read before going to bed. 'Ah!' thought I, 'they have been reading together. Lucy never reads the Bible with me!' and I went to bed with that small jealous cloud hanging over the bright visions dancing through my brain. To bed, but not to sleep; for my too faithful ear kept repeating with unfailing accuracy and precision every note of the principal melodies in ROBERTO. At first it was with keen delight that I followed the music, but it gradually became irksome, and then hateful in its monotony. I turned impatiently again and again, and hid my head under the bed-clothes, but without effect. I sat up, and there was momentary relief; but the moment I laid my head on the pillow again, its pulses beat time to my ghostly visitants.

At length, unable to bear it any longer, I got out of bed, and softly opening the window, leaned out, and suffered the cool night air to

fan my feverish brow. The sensation was delightful, and the loveliness of the night tempted me to remain for some time at the open window, for the moon was shining in all her splendour, and lighted up with silvery beauty the surrounding scenery. But I soon began to feel the effects of my imprudence, and was glad to creep shivering into bed again, where I experienced a renewal of my sensations, and tossed about till a late hour of the morning, when I fell asleep, only to exchange one species of torture for another, in the now pantomimic gestures of the performers, their gaudy dresses being glaringly exaggerated in my feverish slumbers, and I awoke, jaded and unrefreshed, to start and stare at Lucy standing by my bedside.

‘I was very sorry to wake you, Harry dear,’ said she; ‘but the first bell rang some time ago.’

I sprang up and made a hasty toilette,

whilst kind Lucy moved softly about, folding and putting past the finery which I had thrown down anywhere when I undressed, and which lay scattered in confusion about the room.





CHAPTER V.

THE BRAIN FEVER.

'Just as I am—without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee—
O Lamb of God, I come!'

CHARLOTTE ELLIOTT.

THAT was a miserable day; everything went wrong, everything jarred on my strung nerves; once, when Lucy came into my classroom, to ask me a question about a piece of music, I felt as though a cool breeze passed over me, but it was only for a moment; and at length, tortured by a blundering pupil playing 'ROBERTO TOI QUE J'AIME,' I lost command of myself,

and struck the poor girl on the cheek. The startled look she turned on me recalled my senses, and, mortified and ashamed, I burst into tears.

‘Please don’t cry; it wasn’t very sore,’ said she, really meaning to be kind and forgiving; but my humiliation was complete when she whispered, ‘I promise you, Miss Maurice, I won’t tell anybody,’ and I forced myself to say (haughtily enough, I dare say), ‘I beg your pardon, I am not well to-day, and did not know what I was doing;’ and hastily dismissing her, I retreated to my room, where, hiding my face in the counterpane of the bed, I sobbed as though my heart would break. Fortunately it was the last lesson of the day, and night came at last, but brought no relief to my excited brain. I think I must have been delirious. I remember I had fearful dreams, and yet was never sleeping; that I tried to get up, but was prevented by

Lucy; and then I seemed to awake from a long sleep to hear Mrs. Foster proposing to have me removed from Raspberry House; and the doctor, to whom she had been speaking, telling her that a brain fever was not infectious, and, besides, that to remove me, might cost me my life. I heard him saying, too, that I must have got a sudden chill; and I remembered the open window and the cold night air, to which I had exposed myself in a thin night-dress; and then Lucy's sweet voice came softly in, pleading to be allowed to nurse me. I heard it all, though, when they spoke to me, I could neither understand nor give a coherent answer; but I remember laughing wildly when Mademoiselle bent over me, wiping her eyes, and muttering, 'That opera! oh, that opera!' Weary days, and still more wearisome nights, followed, during which Lucy nursed me with rare skill and tender-

ness, assisted by Mademoiselle, whenever she could get a moment's leisure. I always knew when my nurse was changed, by the unusual fuss in the room, for, from an anxious desire to keep all quiet, Mademoiselle would knock over chairs, jingle cups and medicine bottles, and make a subdued noise generally, which almost drove me mad. She was always shaking my pillows, pulling the bed-clothes straight, and asking me if I needed anything,—attentions which annoyed me so much, that I soon learned to feign sleep when she was in the room. But I never really slept till the crisis came, and then I fell into a deep slumber, which lasted several hours, and from which I awoke free from fever, but so weak that for the first time I thought myself dying, and the terrors of the world to come laid hold of my spirit.

‘Dear Harry,’ whispered Lucy, her eyes shining through happy tears, ‘the doctor says

you have got the turn !' But I only shook my head despairingly.

'I am *so* happy to hear you are better, my love,' said Mrs. Foster, coming in to pay her regular morning visit.

'I'm not better, I'm dying !' I peevishly replied.

'You *are* better, my love,' said she, with a frightened, scared look at my face; 'the doctor says so, and he knows best.'

'I'm dying !' I repeated; 'and oh, Mrs. Foster, I am not fit to die ! What a sinner I have been !'

'*You* a sinner !' she replied, half crying; 'who have always been such a good Christian.'

'Yes,' said I, 'a hardened sinner; I see it all plain enough now.'

'You don't know what you are saying, my love,' she said soothingly; 'but if you would like to see the minister, I'll send for him immediately.'

‘I don’t want him,’ said I, ‘he can do me no good.’

‘I can’t understand how such nonsense could come into *your* head,’ said she. ‘If it had been Miss Smith, I would not have been so much surprised.’

‘I suspect we have Miss Smith to thank for it,’ said Miss Brown, who, I had no idea, was in the room.

‘Vous avez tort!’ hissed Mademoiselle, from behind the bed-curtain, where she had been hiding; ‘you are still in the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity.’

‘Leave the room, Mademoiselle; you have forgotten yourself,’ said Mrs. Foster angrily; and Mademoiselle went away hanging her head, and I heard afterwards that next day she made, of her own accord, an humble apology to Miss Brown.

‘It is time Miss Maurice had rest; the doctor said she was to be kept quiet,’ said

Lucy, in reply to a beseeching look from me ; and Mrs. Foster gladly assenting, left the room, followed by Miss Brown.

‘ Oh, Lucy, pray for me,’ said I, when we were left alone.

‘ I will, Harry,’ said she, taking my hand in hers.

‘ Pray aloud, pray *with* me,’ said I. She hesitated, but I repeated the request with tears, and she knelt down and said a few words in a low tone. My head was weak and confused at the time, and I could not recall afterwards what she had said, but the very sound of her voice pleading for me soothed and comforted me, and I fell asleep with her hand clasped in both of mine. I awoke to find the doctor again by my bedside, Mrs. Foster having sent for him instead of the minister.

‘ There is no cause for alarm,’ said he, laying his hand on my forehead, and feeling my

pulse, and fixing his eyes on me with a keen, searching glance, which seemed to go right through me and read my very thoughts. 'She is decidedly better, though weak, as might have been expected. Keep her quiet, and give her plenty of nourishing food, and with a little more of Miss Smith's excellent nursing, she'll soon be all right again. Miss Smith has the faculty of nursing. Truly a blessed gift,' he added, smiling, and looking approvingly at Lucy.

'There, my love ; you see I was right,' said Mrs. Foster. 'The doctor knows best ; he says you are better. The poor child took it into her head that she was dying, doctor, and she was so frightened.'

I turned away my head to hide the tears which filled my eyes at this speech, and to avoid the doctor's gaze, which was again turned inquiringly upon me ; but he made no remark, and left the room in silence,

along with Mrs. Foster. He returned, however, almost immediately, having got quit of her, I know not how, and walking straight up to the bedside, he again felt my pulse, but only, I believe, as an excuse.

‘My dear child,’ said he, ‘you are not dying now ; but I hope that you will not forget that you must die some time, and may die at any time ; and I hope, too, that you will remember that religion is not intended to support in the hour of death alone, but to guide and cheer us through life, being in itself a life of faith on the Son of God, who gave himself for us, and died that we might live.’ He moved softly away, but looked back before leaving the room, saying in a low, solemn tone, ‘“ This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief.” That is better than anything I can say to you, my dear,’ he

added, as he went out, and shut the door after him.

That was not the only time that good man spoke to me ; and much I learned from him, and from Mademoiselle too (who was always giving me a word in season) ; but, after all, it was Lucy who was my best earthly teacher ; it was Lucy who showed me that the way was open, that the work was done ; it was Lucy who pointed out to me the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world, and entreated me to look to the cross and be saved, even as the poor, serpent-bitten Israelites of old looked to the serpent of brass and were healed ; and, above all, it was Lucy who (conquering an almost insuperable repugnance) read and prayed with me daily, bearing patiently all my weakness, and darkness, and ignorance, till my mind gradually opened to receive the truth, and I entered into the liberty of a child of God.

I rose from that sick-bed a new creature, new motives influencing me, new hopes animating me ; and I hope and believe that at that time the first spark of the divine life was kindled within me, which, though but a feeble and glimmering light (at times almost undiscernible), has, I trust, continued to burn till now, and will, I hope, continue till—no longer dimmed and obscured by the mists of earth—it shines forth in all its native purity and brightness, in the Father's house above.

And now my aunt, who had only been prevented from coming to me sooner by severe sickness in her own family, came and took me home, to be nursed, and petted, and cared for till I had lost even the shadow of an excuse for remaining any longer an invalid, and began to think of returning to Raspberry House.



CHAPTER VI.

LUCY.

‘Soon to come to earth again,
Judge of angels and of men,
Hear us now and hear us then ;
Jesus, hear and save !’—HEBER.



LETTER from Mademoiselle hastened my departure. Lucy was ill—very ill; had been so for weeks ; and, alas ! I feared that the fatigue and anxiety she had undergone on my account, might have impaired her health and undermined her constitution, and I set off with a heavy heart, anxious to return, in some small degree, the tender care she had lavished on me during my illness. I found

Mademoiselle waiting for me at the station. She was delighted to see me, hugging me affectionately, and kissing me on both cheeks.

‘I am so very glad to see you,’ said she.

‘Is Lucy very ill?’ I asked in trembling tones.

‘No-*non*,’ she hesitatingly replied. ‘She be one day better, and one day worse; but I do have fear, *mon amie*; and the doctor, he says nothing, but looks grave.’

It was wonderful how much Mademoiselle managed to communicate to me during our short drive in the fly to Raspberry House. How that it was the holidays (a circumstance which had wholly escaped my recollection), and that Mrs. Foster had gone to the country with those of the pupils who had come from abroad, or who had no home to go to; how she had told her to spare nothing which might conduce to the ease or comfort of the invalid, and had left the cook

(an old faithful servant) to assist her in nursing Lucy, because she considered her more trustworthy than any servant she had.

‘There be good things about Madame Fostare, after all,’ remarked Mademoiselle, nodding her head approvingly.

‘Has Lucy no friends?’ I asked.

‘No; at least not in England,’ said she. ‘Her mother died when she was a mere child, and the aunt with whom she lived after her father’s death went to Australia about the time she came to Raspberry House.’

‘Does she think herself dangerously ill?’ I forced myself to inquire.

‘Yes, I think so,’ said Mademoiselle very sadly. ‘She never says anything about it—not one word; but I am very certain that she think herself dying; and, *mon amie*,’ she added in a whisper, as we reached our desti-

nation, 'she be unhappy in her mind, that vexes me more than anything; and I'm so glad you are come, for I was at my wit's end!'

I found my dear Lucy looking much better than I had expected (pleasure at seeing me had, I suppose, flushed her cheeks and brightened her eyes); and I could not help remarking to Mademoiselle that I hoped her fears had exaggerated the danger, but she only shook her head; and next morning, when I saw Lucy's wasted form, my heart sank within me, and I acknowledged she was right—right, too, as to her being unhappy; for the longing, wistful expression I had sometimes observed in her eyes never left them now, and had painfully deepened in intensity. She was a sweet invalid to nurse, so gentle and patient, so grateful for the smallest service, and so anxious to save us trouble—too anxious—and we wished she

would only give more, for we would have grudged nothing to show our love for her. But though Lucy evidently thought herself done with this world, she never spoke to us of her hopes and fears. She listened with evident pleasure to our daily reading of the Scriptures ; and I often saw her lips moving as in prayer ; but a want of peace, a yearning expression of unrest, was too plainly written on her countenance to leave us in any doubt. I would have given worlds to see the wistful expression leave those blue eyes, and was often obliged to leave the room to give vent to the feelings which could no longer be controlled. But, alas ! what could I say to Lucy who had taught me all I knew myself ? what could I do but weep and pray for her ?

‘ You thought Lucy a Christian at the time of the confirmation,’ I remarked one day to Mademoiselle, who was equally puzzled and distressed with myself.

‘Yes,’ she said, ‘I did,’ and then she paused and knitted her brows; ‘but, *mon amie*, the *gospale* was sent to make us both good and happy. Now, though Lucy be so very good, she is not happy.’

‘But look at me!’ she added with a sigh and slight grimace; ‘I be happy enough, but very far from goodness! I tell you how it is,’ she continued, after a thoughtful pause; ‘I suspect she has been brought up amongst people who be always talk, talk, talking about religion; who say you must see *this* and you must see *that*, you must feel *this* and you must feel *that*, and the poor child’s mind has got confused, and she really do not know whether she have repented or not. These good people forget that our minds are differently constituted, our dispositions are often the very contrary, and our circumstances not two all alike. There now,’ said she, knitting her brows and bringing it out

with a great effort and many grimaces ; ‘Lucy’s mind has invested the truths of revelation with a mysterious depth, from exploring which her spirit has shrunk in trembling awe. Far be from me,’ she continued, shaking her head, ‘to say that there are two roads to heaven, *non pas* ! not that —there be but one way ; but some enter softly, whilst others take the kingdom by violence. You see, *mon amie*,’ she said, coming very close and speaking in a whisper—though we were on the ground floor, and Lucy at the very top of the house—‘she open her mind to me a very little that night you went to that opera abominable. She says she want to believe, but cannot ; she’s an “*unwilling sceptic*.” But let us not despair,’ she added, ‘she’ll get light ; she shall not seek in vain !’

Oh, how I loved the French governess at that moment ! I could not help kissing

her, and she returned my embrace with interest.

‘Ah!’ cried she, as the sound of carriage-wheels was heard on the gravel walk outside, ‘there is the doctor. He is a good man; I will ask him to speak to Lucy.’

‘But, Mademoiselle, think of her!’ I exclaimed, remembering all her sensitive reserve, and fearing the consequences.

‘The case is desperate, and we must use some means,’ said she, firmly; ‘but I will make him promise not to tell her I asked it of him.’

I ran upstairs to prepare Lucy for his coming; and during the few minutes which elapsed before he appeared, I fidgeted about the room, pretending to put things to rights, afraid she might suspect the cause of the delay. She was expressing her surprise at it, when they came in; and I knew from Mademoiselle’s guilty face, and careful avoid-

ance of Lucy's eye, that she had told him. However, the doctor looked wholly unconscious, asked his regular daily questions, looked at her tongue, felt her pulse, and prescribed as usual. But instead of then going away, he took a chair, and sat down by the bedside. Lucy looked at him with surprise, for his time was precious, and he rarely sat down in a sick-room; but he said nothing, and in the silence which followed, I distinctly heard (or thought I heard) the beating of my own heart, whilst Mademoiselle took refuge behind the bed-curtain. I believe the doctor was puzzled how to begin; and it was Lucy who broke the silence after all.

‘Do you think I am dying, Doctor?’ she quietly asked, in a low but firm tone, evidently thinking his hesitation proceeded from a dislike to breaking the truth to her.

‘I always remember my patients at a

throne of grace,' he quickly replied. But the ice being broken, he continued, 'But I trust, my dear Miss Smith, that death has lost its terrors for you. I hope you know and love Him who has destroyed the power of death.'

Lucy did not reply. Whether she could not answer in the affirmative, or felt that all hope of life was now gone, I could not tell; but a dark shade passed over her countenance.

'How comforting,' continued the doctor, 'whether we live or die, to know that Jesus died and rose again; and that, by believing in Him, we may all participate in the blessings thus secured to us! Let us never forget,' said he, after he had waited in vain for some response from Lucy, 'that it is the looking to Jesus, and trusting in Him, that saves. It has been well remarked by an eminent divine,¹ "That it is not to him who sees Christ brightly that the promises are

¹ DR. CHALMERS.

made, but to him who looks to Christ. A bright view may minister comfort, but it is the looking which saves." It has also been remarked, "That the children of Israel who looked to the brazen serpent may not all have had a distinct and positive conviction that they were to be cured by so doing; still they lifted up their eyes and were healed."

A bright flash, a ray of hope, suddenly lighted up Lucy's face; but it was only for a moment, and it passed away, leaving the gloom behind only the more observable.

'What a blessing,' continued the doctor, after a pause, 'to know that the gospel comes to us unfettered by any conditions! We have only to believe and live.'

'Yes; but we must believe before we can live,' said Lucy, in a strange, dry tone, which pained me exceedingly, coming from her lips.

‘And surely, Miss Smith, you are not an unbeliever!’ said the doctor gravely.

She gave him a quick, wistful glance, but said nothing.

‘Surely, my dear child, you do not doubt the Saviour!’ he gently urged.

‘Doubt Him!’ said Lucy, almost indignantly; ‘how can I? If we deny Him, He abideth faithful; He cannot deny himself.’

The doctor looked puzzled; and, as though weary of the conversation, Lucy turned away, and closed her eyes; and I saw presently the tears stealing slowly from under her long eyelashes. I knew now, though I scarcely understood it at the time, that the violent emotion she had displayed at the time of the confirmation, when I found her lying on the floor of my room, had been the passionate outburst of a proud, sensitive spirit, galled and wounded by having its inner secrets exposed to the gaze of others;

and I feared that something of the same feeling caused her silence now. But I was wrong. It was not so ; for, when the doctor rose to go away, saying he was afraid he had spoken too much, and worn her out, she turned her wet eyes upon him, and thanked him for what he had said, with a grateful sweetness, which at once touched and pleased him.

‘My dear child,’ said he, ‘I wish much I could say anything to comfort you. A thought has struck me, on which I would like you to reflect. When a person is in danger of being drowned, and another, who can swim well, goes to save him, his only chance lies in trusting wholly to his deliverer, and in making no efforts of his own. If he struggles, he is lost. And may we not apply this to the salvation offered to us in the Bible ? It is full and free—without money and without price ; but the sinner must trust wholly to

the strong arm of the Saviour, and make no efforts to save himself. Think of that, dear Miss Smith,' he added, tenderly, as he left the room.

When he was gone, I took his place at the bedside; and taking her thin little hand in mine, I fondly stroked and kissed it. Then the reserve broke down, and the pent-up emotion burst forth; and with her head lying on my bosom, she bemoaned her condition, and sobbed so bitterly, that I feared the consequences in her weak state.

'My darling!' I whispered, much distressed, 'you are hurting yourself. Think, dear Lucy, of all you taught me when I was ill.'

'I wish I could believe like you, Harry,' she replied; 'but my heart is so hard! I have prayed for light till I have lost hope. It is so difficult to realize the invisible! I have no faith;' and she wept bitterly.

Then Mademoiselle, unable to restrain herself any longer, came forward.

‘Vous vous trompez, ma chère amie!’ said she, in soft liquid tones, exquisitely modulated to suit the ear of the dying girl. ‘Eternal life be the *gift* of God, and salvation is not to be obtained by entreaty, but by accepting the gift so freely offered to us.’ ‘Blessed be God,’ continued she, ‘it be freely offered to us all. There are no distinctions in the gospel call; so that no one can say to his neighbour, “*I* am called, but *thou* art not.” Ah! mon amie, you say that you have not faith, that you cannot believe; but surely you can *trust* your soul to Jesus. Just think of his last address to his disciples—so plaintive, and yet so comforting: “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for

you." Ah! mon amie,' she added, clasping her hands imploringly, 'these be precious words. Take them as *God's provided salvation* from your doubts.'¹

'Dear Mademoiselle! how I love you!' sobbed Lucy. But she looked faint and exhausted; and laying her tenderly back on her pillow, I hastened from the room to ascertain if her early invalid dinner was in course of preparation.

As I went out, I came against some one who had evidently been listening at the

¹ 'Precious words! Let every mourner cling to them as the very tie that binds him with inseparable links to the dearest of his vanished friends. Let every unwilling sceptic take them as God's provided salvation from his doubts. Let every heaven-bound pilgrim see them written as with the first golden beams of the morning, always on the furthest horizon of his view; and let those who feel that their pilgrimage is drawing to a close, and who look wistfully, and perhaps in vain, for a clear outline of the better country to which they are going, rest themselves on such a text as this, till their strength is recruited, and the clouds pass over, and they can go on their way, if not rejoicing, at least in peace.'—*Sermons by Dr. Raleigh*. London 1863.

keyhole. It was Kirsty Galloway, our old Scotch cook, who had been left with Mademoiselle by Mrs. Foster, and who had been of great use to us in the nursing of Lucy, having a warm, motherly heart, and a vast amount of good common sense, which made her services invaluable in a sick-room. I had seldom come into contact with her till during Lucy's illness ; but she had endeared herself both to Mademoiselle and myself by her unselfish devotion, not only to our dear invalid, but to her two nurses. But we had yet to learn the worth of the diamond enclosed in that homely casket. Evidently ashamed at being caught, Kirsty made a hasty retreat, but thought better of it, and came back.

‘ Miss Morris,’ said she, ‘ I never hearkened at a door in my life before ; but I cam’ up to tell ye her denner was ready, and I heard the puir bairn greetin’, and I couldna help

listening. Miss Morris,' said she again, coming very close, and whispering, 'Maddy Mozzell spak' guid sense, an' tae the point; but there's nane o' ye jeest takin' the richt way wi' that bonnie bairn. Ye should direck her to the grund o' hope, an' no let her brude on her ain thochts an' feelin's. She'll ne'er get satisfaction in them. She should be taught to look *oot*, an' no *in*.'

I stared at Kirsty with unfeigned surprise; but I was in the mood to catch at straws, and a thought struck me.

'What would you think of speaking to Miss Smith yourself, Kirsty?' I said, eagerly.

'Weel, I dinna ken,' said she, doubtfully. 'It wouldna be easy for me to speak without telling I'd been listening; but I'll e'en try. I'll awa doon for the tray, an' wait you an' gan' in wi' me.'

We four being alone in the house, we had become quite like a small family, and very





"But our cook was a woman of resources."—*Page* 103.

familiar with each other, Kirsty often remaining in the room to have a talk whilst Lucy was at her meals; so that I knew no surprise would be expressed at her doing so now.

At sight of Kirsty and her tray Lucy conquered her emotion and dried her eyes, but turned with loathing from the carefully prepared food, so temptingly set out on the snowy napkin. But our cook was a woman of resources; and pathetically lamenting her lost labour, she coaxed her first into swallowing a mouthful or two to please her, and then into partaking freely of the refreshment she needed so much.

‘Noo,’ said she, ‘ye’re like anither thing, dawty. There’s naething like mate for strengthening a body. I often think,’ she continued, ‘hoo muckle puir Jonathan was the better o’ the wee pickle honey. It was a cruel thing o’ auld Saul to starve his sodgers!’

An amused smile began to play round Lucy's mouth, such as I had not seen there since my return to Raspberry House ; and as Kirsty continued to make quaint remarks in a grave, sententious manner, she even gave occasionally a low laugh. Sick at heart, and inexpressibly anxious, I could not help feeling irritated with the old woman, and even with Lucy ; and I was sure Mademoiselle was of the same mind, from the nervous manner in which she twisted and entwined her long fingers, and from the fearful grimaces she was making. But we were wrong, and Kirsty was right. She was only taking Lucy out of herself, and preparing the way for what she had to say.

‘ I.dinna like to read the Auld Testament,’ said she. ‘ I read it as a duty, ye ken, but I read the New for pleasure ; an’ I’m awfu’ fond o’ Paul’s epistles, though I’m quite o’ Peter’s opinion that there’s some things in them

hard to understand; but, ye ken, there's sae much in the New Testament that's as plain as day, we should jeest be thankfu' an' no try to understand things above oor capacities. They speak aboot the prophecies in the Auld Testament,' she continued, 'but there's one in the New that bates them a'—"*In Him shall the Gentiles trust*"—it's fulfillin', and fulfillin', and fulfillin' every day afore oor very een; an' it's as clear a proof o' the truth o' revelation as ony prophecy I e'er heard o'—'

'That's an Old Testament prophecy quoted in the New,' I remarked, rather dryly.

'Weel, sae much the better,' said Kirsty. 'I've nae objections; the aulder the mair wonderfu'; and it shows Paul was o' the same mind as me, for he quotes it, ye ken.'

'It is a wonderful prophecy; I never thought of it before,' said Lucy earnestly.

'Ay,' said Kirsty, 'an' isn't it comforting

to think that the Hope o' the Gentiles is to be our Judge ?

' Ah, yes,' replied Lucy with beaming eyes ;
' all judgment is to be given to the Son.
Jesus is to be our Judge.'

' An' isn't it wonderfu' to think that his dominion's to gang on increasin' in this world till it spread from sea to sea, and from shore to shore ; and mair wonderfu' still, to think this Kings of kings, this Lord of lords, this Prince of the kings o' the earth, is the same Jesus who died for our sins upon the cross ?'

' Ah, yes,' said Lucy with her wistful, longing gaze ; ' but we cannot understand it ; it is a great mystery.'

' Na, na !' said Kirsty, solemnly ; '*we* canna understand it, but we can believe it for a' that. I mind fine aboot the time I was brought to the knowledge o' the truth. I was sair fashed trying to understand things, but

it wouldna dae; an' I never found peace till I gi'ed it a' up, and cam to see that the gospel was true, whether I believed it or no.'

Kirsty paused for a moment, but Lucy made no response; but I knew she had greedily drunk in every word.

'Oh! honey, honey,' said the old woman, her homely features lighted up with a fervid emotion which imparted to them a holy beauty, 'the Sun o' Righteousness is aye shining, though oor blind een whiles canna see Him; but that maks nae odds, He's aye shining whether *we* see Him or no. Oh, honey, trust Him, though it be in the very dark!'

Lucy was weeping again, but it was a gentle shower, very different from the bitter sobs which had formerly rent her weak frame, and she drew Kirsty's head down on the pillow and kissed her on the cheek.

'Ye're tired, dawty, an' maun rest noo,'

said Kirsty, gulping down a sob, and gently patting her as she carefully arranged her pillows. As she was leaving the room she passed Mademoiselle, and the impulsive Frenchwoman caught her in her arms, whispering as she kissed her, 'Je vous aime ! je vous aime !'—words which Kirsty certainly did not understand ; but there was no mistaking the feelings which dictated the action, and she returned Mademoiselle's embrace with right good will.

When she was gone I persuaded Mademoiselle to lie down and try to sleep, for I knew she was worn out (having sat up with Lucy the previous night), and then I took my Bible to read aloud, as I always did to Lucy after her dinner. 'The entrance of thy words giveth light,' I repeated to myself, as I sent up a silent petition that the reading of God's own word might be blessed to her. I felt disappointed that our regular portion

was in the historical book of the Acts, and I am afraid that I read the account of Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus rather hurriedly, and then turned eagerly to the First Epistle of John, and began the fifth chapter. I read slowly, and with emphasis, thinking every word would tell—every statement of truth in that beautiful chapter appearing to me so clear and full of light, that I thought Lucy could not fail to feel the same; and when I came to the verse, 'And this is the record, that God hath *given* to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son,' I could not help looking up to see the effect. She was asleep! Yes, sleeping as quietly and peacefully as an infant; and chagrined and mortified, I laid my head down on the bed, and wept bitter tears of disappointment and despair. I was weary and exhausted, both in mind and body; and after a while I fell asleep, and must have slept for some time,

for I awoke (stiff and sore from the constrained position in which I had been sitting), to find Lucy awake, lying looking at me.

‘Have I been sleeping?’ cried I, starting up. ‘You should have roused me, darling,’ added I, as I held the cooling draught to her lips, which her parched throat always required after sleep.

‘I was so glad to see you getting a little rest, Harry dear,’ she replied. Something in the tone of her voice made me glance eagerly at her, and my heart gave a great leap, for the wistful expression was gone from her eyes. Yes! gone for ever, though I knew it not at the time.

‘I have been so happy lying, thinking, Harry,’ said she, in reply to my eager questioning glance. ‘I see it all so plain now; my only wonder is I did not see it before. Ah! Kirsty was right, the Sun of Righteousness has always been shining; but

my eyes have been blinded to his beams. I *knew* it all the time, but I wanted to *feel* it in my own consciousness; and instead of looking at the sun, I have been looking within to find the effect of his beams. But I have given up struggling now, Harry, and am clinging to the strong arm of the Saviour, just as the doctor described it,' added she, looking up in my face, with a happy smile.

'My *dear, dear* Lucy!' said I, weeping tears of joy over her.

'Ah!' continued she, 'Mademoiselle described it well as a *gift*; and all we have got to do is to accept. I think, Harry, that if I had been with Paul on the road to Damascus, and had said, like him, "Lord, what wouldst Thou have *me* to *do*?" the Saviour would have replied, "The work is finished—*do* nothing, I have done all!" These are beautiful lines,' said she, after a pause:

‘JUST as I am—without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid’st me come to Thee,—
O Lamb of God, I come.’

It was like the sun breaking through the clouds; and from that time Lucy’s peace flowed ‘as a river,’ her reserve vanished away; and not only to Mademoiselle, to me, and to Kirsty, did she open her mind and speak freely and fully of her hope, but to the doctor also, and he rejoiced with us in the happy change. All her previous knowledge seemed now to come into play to support and invigorate her faith; and during the short time she survived, it was a privilege to be with her.

‘She talk, for all the world, like an old experienced Christian,’ Mademoiselle would say, wiping her eyes and squeezing my hand. Once, when some allusion was made to the past, the old wistful look came back for a moment to her eyes. ‘Ah,’ said she, ‘let me

not look back, rather let me look forward. Much as I would like to serve the Saviour on earth, I would rather die as I am now, than live and run the risk of going back to my old feelings; it has been with me both fightings without, and fears *within*. Truly we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, with spiritual wickedness in high places. When I feel my faith weak and wavering, I just go to the cross, and rest there, saying, like one of old, "*If I perish, I perish here.*" My feelings are those expressed in the hymn—

"Other refuge have I none;
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee."

'Oh, how proud I have been!' said she one day, after she had been lying thinking for some time. 'How wrongly I spoke to Miss Brown at the time of the confirmation, and she was far better than I was!'

'Lucy!' I remonstrated, much surprised.

‘Yes,’ said she, ‘far better; she was consistent, and acted up to the light she had, whereas I sinned against light. Ah! Harry dear, promise me you will speak seriously to Miss Brown, and try to do her some good.’

I hesitated, for the task was distasteful to me; but Lucy was very weak, and burst into tears, and I was glad to promise all she wished. She begged Mademoiselle to promise too, which, warned by my experience, she did at once, though I saw her swallowing down a grimace as she spoke.

Lucy died a few days afterwards; and though Mademoiselle and I, and Kirsty too, wept over her grave as though our very hearts would break, and mourned for her as for a much-loved sister, the time came when we felt we could not wish her back again, but could rejoice that her weary spirit was safe in that happy land where doubts and fears

cannot enter, where faith is no longer needed, and hope is lost in certainty of bliss, and where love is all and all, and reigns triumphant,—that land where the hunger of the soul is unknown, where there is fulness of joy for evermore.

'In that far land, the citizens all share one equal bread,
And keep desire and hunger still, although to fulness
fed ;

Unwearied by satiety, unracked by hunger's strife,
The air they breathe is nourishment and spiritual life.
Around them, bright with endless spring, perpetual
roses bloom ;

Warm balsams gratefully exude luxurious perfume ;
Red crocuses and lilies white shine dazzling in the
sun ;

Green meadows yield them harvests green, and streams
with honey run ;

Unbroken droop the laden boughs, with heavy fruitage
bent ;

Of incense and of odour strange the air is redolent ;
And neither sun, nor moon, nor stars, dispense their
changeful light,

But the Lamb's eternal glory makes the happy city
bright.'¹

¹ From the *Amber Witch*, translated from the German
by Lady Duff Gordon. The following are the original

And, soon after, Mrs. Foster and the pupils returned to Raspberry House. The elder girls looked grave and sad when they saw Mademoiselle and me in our mourning dresses; but they carefully avoided any mention of Lucy's name; and though the younger ones sometimes spoke about 'poor Miss Smith,' children soon forget, and Raspberry House knew Lucy no more for ever. Mrs. Foster cried a little when she first spoke about her death; but she never asked any questions about the state

Latin lines, composed by Peter Damianus (Bishop of Ostia) after Augustine's prose, 1072:

'Uno pane vivunt cives utriusque patriæ
Avidi et semper pleni, quod habent desiderant;
Non *sacietas* fastidit, neque fames cruciat,
Inhiantes semper edunt, et edentes inhiant.
Flos perpetuus rosarum, ver agit perpetuum;
Candent lilia, rubescit crocus, sudat balsamum;
Virent prata, vernant sata, rivi mellis influunt,
Pigmentorum spirat odor liquor et aromatum;
Pendent poma floridorum non lapsura nemorum;
Non alternat luna vires, sol vel curcus syderum,
Agnus est *foelicitis* urbis lumen innociduum.'

of her mind, and we had no wish to communicate particulars.

‘It would be like casting pearls before swine,’ Mademoiselle indignantly remarked. ‘But, ah ! how wicked I am !’ she cried the next moment, with tears. ‘I thought that dear little creature had taught me a lesson of love, I would *nevere* forget ;’ and from that moment Mademoiselle’s whole manner towards Mrs. Foster underwent a change. There was a pitying tenderness in it which must have puzzled that lady not a little ; but when the French governess endeavoured to arouse her to her sinful condition and need of a Saviour, she met with an astonished and indignant repulse which precluded a repetition of the offence.

And the old routine began again, and the old jingling was never out of my ears, and I had lost my *Picciola* ; and much I missed her, and yearned over her memory ; but her

influence remained behind—she had not left me as she found me. My weary, stoical indifference was gone; or if it did return at times, I had found the antidote. I was no longer friendless and homeless, for I could look up to an Almighty Friend, even to my Elder Brother, who, having been tempted like unto his brethren, is able to succour those who are tempted, being touched with a feeling for their infirmities; and I could look forward to a heavenly home, even to a place provided for me in one of the many mansions of the Father's house above. The world without was the same—the world within, oh, how different!

‘ Two worlds are ours ; ’tis only sin
Forbids us to descry
The mystic heaven and earth within,
Plain as the sea and sky.’



CHAPTER VII.

MISS BROWN.

'Sow, though the rock repel thee,
In its cold and sterile pride ;
Some cleft there may be riven,
Where the little seed may hide.
Work while the daylight lasteth,
Ere the shades of night come on,
Ere the Lord of the harvest cometh,
And the labourer's work is done.'



OUR promise to Lucy about Miss Brown weighed heavily on my mind, and on Mademoiselle's too ; but we could not break faith with our dead darling, and buckled on our armour for the task, which we found more difficult in one respect, and easier in another, than we had anticipated. So far from being displeased,

Miss Brown seemed flattered at being the object of so much interest ; but she was very very difficult to reach :—that she, Miss Brown, was a good Christian, and required no change, being laid down as an indisputable fact, from which no reasonings, no entreaties of ours could move her. She showed a strong taste for theological discussion, and I am persuaded must have sometimes sat up half the night reading controversial treatises which suited her purpose ; for often, when we had thought her fairly defeated, she would be ready at our next meeting with an entirely new set of arguments, and renew the controversy with fresh spirit. At length one evening she completely vanquished us both ; and sad, mortified, and disappointed, I resolved to be done with Miss Brown, thinking I had now fulfilled my promise to Lucy, and I am afraid I even forgot to pray for Miss Brown that night.

Next morning she came into my room before going down stairs (which she often did now, for we had become very good friends), and at the same moment the French governess walked in from the small chamber which had once been dear Lucy's, but which she now occupied. Mademoiselle looked jaded and sad, and had altogether a languid, dispirited appearance, very different from her usual lively buoyancy.

'I am afraid you have not slept well, Mademoiselle,' said Miss Brown kindly, after we had wished each other good morning.

'No,' she said, with a deep sigh; 'no, I did not sleep much.'

'I doubt we talked too much last night,' remarked Miss Brown, turning to me with a smile of conscious triumph.

'Ah! oui, oui,' said Mademoiselle; 'we talk, and we dispute, and we argue; but

what does it all come to, *mon amie*, if your soul be lost! Ah!' continued she, laying a hand on each of Miss Brown's shoulders, and gazing into her eyes with a sad, loving gaze, 'it was concern about your soul kept me awake, *ma chère amie*; for its redemption be precious, and it ceaseth for ever;' and the largest tears I ever saw flowed down *Mademoiselle's* sallow cheeks.

Miss Brown's face flushed all over, her lips quivered, and she burst into tears. It was the right word at the right time. Her hard heart was reached at last. Love had conquered that proud spirit, when all our arguments and reasonings had failed; and from that moment Miss Brown really began to cry in earnest, 'What must I do to be saved?' She became anxious to learn—meek, humble, teachable as a little child; and she received the little child's reward, for she entered the kingdom without a struggle;

and having received the gospel message as news of great joy, she passed at once into the possession of that peace which passeth all understanding; she not only drank of the water of life, but drank deeply. Her gratitude to Mademoiselle and myself was unbounded. No office was too servile, no act of service too menial, to prove her grateful feelings; and I believe (had we allowed her) she would willingly have washed our feet every day, imitating her Divine Master both in letter and in spirit. The change was too wonderful to pass unnoticed, or escape remark. And certainly Miss Brown did not hide her light under a bushel; but once in possession herself of the blessing she had so long despised and rejected, she became enthusiastically desirous that others should partake of the benefit, and immediately commenced a missionary crusade amongst the pupils. She allowed no opportunity to pass

unimproved. In season and out of season she spoke to them of their eternal interests ; and I have good reason to believe that more than one young heart was touched, and looked back afterwards to words spoken to them by their formerly precise, finical English governess as the origin of their first serious impressions. (Amongst these I am happy to include my old friend Miss Jones, who is now a most consistent Christian, and the comfort and delight of her mother's heart.) Some people would probably have thought Miss Brown's zeal outran her discretion ; but Mademoiselle and I looked on with wonder and admiration. Mrs. Foster, puzzled and astonished, first coaxed and persuaded, then got angry and threatened, and finally, finding persuasion and threats equally useless, abruptly dismissed her, all of which Miss Brown took joyfully, declaring it was only too much honour for her to be permitted to

suffer for the cause of Christ; and she did not lose her reward, for a lady at the head of an establishment, equal if not superior to Mrs. Foster's, eagerly sought after and engaged her for the very reason for which she had been dismissed. She is now at the head of an educational establishment of her own, in which religious instruction is imparted in a very different manner from what it used to be in the old times at Raspberry House. And Lucy had been the means of doing it all; for I am certain that had she not made us promise, neither Mademoiselle nor I would have troubled ourselves with Miss Brown. But we learned a lesson from the result of our disagreeable task, which we have never forgotten, and I trust never will.

Many years have passed since then. Other ties bind me now, other cares have sprung up around me; but I can never forget Lucy Smith. One fair-haired, blue-eyed darling I

have named after her ; and as I watch her gentle, loving, winning ways, I could almost fancy I see my old friend as a child, and can only hope that some small portion of her mantle of love may have fallen on my Lucy. Kirsty Galloway, who came to me as cook when I married, but who is now installed as autocrat of the nursery, sometimes sends a pang to my heart by declaring that ‘the bairn’s ower *wise* to live.’ But she qualifies it by adding, in the same breath, ‘But she’s ower guid to dee ; she’ll be one o’ the saut o’ the earth.’ Dear old Kirsty !

I keep up a regular correspondence with Miss Brown, who writes long letters, which beat mine hollow, and with Mademoiselle, who is now engaged in a work of great usefulness in her own country. Her last letter concludes thus : ‘ You ask of me, mon amie, concerning our well-beloved Lucy Smith. You ask if I think she was a Christian all

the time. That I cannot tell; but this I do know, that at the last she really trusted in Jesus; and we know that *whosoever* trusts in Him is safe. We know that whilst on this earth He never refused to heal a suppliant sinner, not even those who touched but the hem of his garment; and we know that He has promised that *whosoever* believeth in Him shall in no wise be cast out, but shall inherit eternal life, even those who cry with tears, "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief."

Dear Mademoiselle, what can I say but, Amen!

THE END.

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the 1990s, the number of people with a mental health problem has increased by 50% (Mental Health Foundation 2000). The prevalence of mental health problems is also increasing in children and young people (Mental Health Foundation 2000).

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the mental health needs of young people (Mental Health Foundation 2000). The National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH) in the USA has identified the need for a 'new paradigm' in the treatment of mental health problems (NIMH 1999). This paradigm is based on the idea of 'recovery' and 'empowerment' (NIMH 1999). Recovery is the process of living a meaningful life, despite the presence of a mental health problem. Empowerment is the process of gaining control over one's life and making choices about one's future (NIMH 1999).

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